

**HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION  
FULL COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES  
February 27, 2008; 4:30 p.m.  
Council Chambers**

**PRESENT**

Trena Carter  
Ian Kohen  
Greg Lewis  
Tony McClendon  
Gil Palmer  
Rosalind Pegram  
John Roberts  
Jason Staley

**ABSENT**

Akua Ofori-Boateng  
Jay Myers  
John Stroh

Unofficial as a quorum not yet present.

**VISITORS PRESENT:**

Carla Barrett.

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Director Arlette Tinsley, Deputy Director Lorraine Smith and Secretary, Lula Young.

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Director Tinsley provided Commissioners with an update of the busy schedule maintained by staff with complaint intakes, case filings and annual dinner planning. She also informed Commissioners of the many public speaking and training commitments provided for four local schools and I.U.P.U.C., for different classes and study programs, with a fourth class to be held at I.U.P.U.C. on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Director thanked the Ad Hoc committee for their work on the annual dinner and Commissioners Palmer, Pegram and Roberts for volunteering to attend an upcoming meeting at the BCSC Administration Building. The meeting, called by Dawn Palmer, Director of Multicultural Diversity for BCSC, will provide program information about the Center for Leadership Development. The Center's program supports youth with a particular focus on the African-American culture and why the leadership development is vital. Commission volunteers will review the program to determine if the program is compatible with the mission statement of the Commission.

Director Tinsley continued her report by sharing a positive experience as a panel member for McKayla Barber's senior project. Miss Barber, an East High School Senior, hosted a Diversity Unit Summit facilitated by Eric Love, Director of Diversity Education at Indiana University. She went on to compliment Miss Barber for the level of student participation and engagement as they addressed questions about witnessing and/or experiencing acts of discrimination. Director Tinsley shared that she was approached by Mrs. Barber, McKayla's mother, during the session who recalled their first meeting when she and her husband filed a complaint of housing discrimination.

**\*\*\* Meeting Called to Order \*\*\***

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Commissioner Roberts called roll then requested any corrections or changes to the January minutes. There were none.

**Commissioner McClendon moved to accept the January 30, 2008 minutes.  
Commissioner Lewis seconded. Motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Deputy Director Smith reported a beginning Donations Account balance of \$5,669.60. After two payments supporting the Illuminating Peace Project at \$150, and \$114.00 for the annual MLK Day Ad, the current account balance was \$5,405.60.

**OPEN FORUM/CURRENT EVENTS & COMMUNITY CONCERNS:**

Commissioner Roberts reported on his presentation to Becky Williams' fifth & sixth grade English classes at Southside Elementary. He shared his experiences of growing up in the south during the Civil Rights Era. He went on to advise that the students were very receptive to his approach of finding the commonality of each student by highlighting the unique differences each student brings to the educational table while identifying for them the only true differences are their gender and thought process. Commissioner Roberts advised he has another speaking engagement with the reading class of teacher, Chuck Grimes.

Commissioner Roberts announced the appointment of Commissioner Tony McClendon as one of the Project Facilitators for the new Manufacturing Industrial Technology (M.I.T.) – Manufacturing Skills & Systems Coordination (M.S.S.C.) program at Ivy Tech.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTION:**

**The slate of officers was presented: Chairperson, Commissioner Palmer; Vice Chairperson, Anthony (Tony) McClendon; Secretary, John Roberts; Treasurer, Akua Ofori-Boateng. No additional nominations were submitted from the floor. The vote was unanimous for each position.**

**WILLIAM R. LAWS AWARD:**

As committee chairperson, Commissioner McClendon provided an overview of the decision-making process utilized. He went on to share that after thoroughly reviewing all nominations, the Committee narrowed their recommendation to three candidates. Their decision was confirmed after utilizing the Six-Sigma decision making matrix which resulted in the same candidate being selected. Commissioner McClendon then submitted Sondra Bolte as the Committee's unanimous recommendation to be considered for the 2008 Laws Award. He went on to add that based on the information in her nomination packet, she crossed all racial and cultural lines in her human resources work and her committed involvement exemplifies the spirit of the Laws Award.

As a member of the Laws Award Committee, Commissioner Lewis stated that he was highly compelled by the, "down in the trenches" approach that Sondra took. He recognized that not only was she willing to put herself on the front line as an activist but also as an advocate. He continued by quoting part of nomination, "she (Sondra Bolte) believes in human rights." Commissioner Lewis shared that there were multiple activities shared in the nomination packet that met each of the criteria listed for selecting a Laws Award recipient.

Commissioner Roberts voiced his support of Sondra as the 2008 recipient and shared his admiration of her steady, stoic grace with which she approaches every problem. He recognized her ability to “bring out peace in a storm” and went on to state his belief that this ability is something that can only be brought out by being ‘in the trenches’ and having been there also being subjected to discrimination.

Director Tinsley shared her first meeting with Sondra Bolte and went on to relate that Sondra had applied to be a commissioner on more than one occasion but instead of turning away, she became an ally and continues working on the ultimate goals of human rights and equality for everyone.

Commissioner discussion ensued. When the question was asked, visitor Carla Barrett shared Sondra's professional title as Human Resources – Director of Ethics. She went on to advise that Sondra worked for 27 years on a (employee) policy on how people are to be treated and that she helps train investigators worldwide to learn how to manage complaints brought forward as mistreatment for policy issues.

Commissioner Kohen advised that he was aware of what Sondra and Carla had gone through and was amazed. Because of this, he was inspired to become a Commissioner to try and make a difference. Commissioner Kohen went on to state that Sondra is an outstanding person, not only from a human rights perspective but at work she is also available.

Commissioner Staley voiced his approval and stated that he was impressed because Sondra bridges the gap, she hasn't focused on any one group, and she has worked to bring everybody together.

**Commissioner Roberts moved to award the 2008 Laws Award to Ms. Sondra Bolte. Commissioner Staley seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **OTHER BUSINESS:**

#### **Discussion of Policy for Funding Local projects from Donations Account**

Commissioners Lewis and Kohen advised that their recommendation is to set a contribution cap of \$500 annually contingent upon the donations account balance being at least \$5,000. The Commissioners also recommended that a funding request form be completed so they will be better informed of how the money will be spent and how it will benefit the overall purpose of the Commission. Commissioners and Staff reviewed the request form provided by Commissioner Lewis. Director Tinsley recommended adding one question to have the applicant explain how their proposed expenditure is consistent with the mission of the Human Rights Commission. In response to a question by Commissioner Carter, Director Tinsley recommended a calendar-year cycle instead of fiscal year. Discussion ensued.

**Commissioner Carter moved to accept the \$500 annual contribution limit and proposed procedures for Funding Requests with recommended change. Commissioner Roberts seconded. Motion carried unanimously**

### **ANNUAL DINNER – AD HOC:**

Deputy Director Smith complimented Ad Hoc Committee members, Commissioners Roberts, Carter and Pegram on their hard work. She went on to confirm that all speakers had been confirmed and that taped remarks would be available from the Commission's first chairperson, Mr. Lee Hamilton. Other plans include having music playing in the background along with a roll call of former commissioners to be displayed on the screens. The Deputy Director advised that

due to the Mayor being in China and unable to attend the dinner, taped remarks by him would also be requested.

Director Tinsley provided Commissioners with an overall count of contest entries and future plans to increase contest participation from Latino, Special Education and High School students. Commissioner Pegram suggested creating a certificate of award for the sponsoring teacher of contest winners. Commissioner Roberts recommended immediately setting the structure for the next annual dinner by getting the 2009 annual dinner committee in place immediately following the 2008 dinner. Discussion ensued.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Carter moved to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Roberts seconded. Meeting adjourned.**